

# **“New Year’s ReSOULutions” Spiritual Resolutions for 2022**



**ESG Community of Care**

**January 19, 2022**

# WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY OF CARE

- We are glad to see you. See who is here and greet them
- Appreciate that ***We are not alone***
- Please Mute your Audio until we ask for participation
- Light a Candle inviting the Creator's presence
- Take a moment To Breathe & Focus on where you are right now



## **“Work for Racial Justice, Start the Day by Going Outside and Other Resolutions for 2022”**

by Tish Harrison Warren. New York Times article January 2, 2022

*...“the chief value of resolutions is not found in our success or failure at keeping them. Instead, they help us reflect on what our lives are like, what we would like them to be like and what practices might bridge the difference.*

*There is goodness then in the very process of making resolutions. There is hope in the idea that we can change — that we can keep growing, learning and trying new things. This hope of renewal is the point of resolutions for me.”*



# A BRIEF HISTORY OF RESOLUTIONS

- The Romans first celebrated the beginning of the new year on March 1.
- Julius Caesar instituted New Year's Day on January 1 to honor Janus, the two-faced god who looks backwards into the old year & forwards into the new.
- The custom of "New Years resolutions" began in this earliest period, as the Romans made resolutions with a moral flavor: **mostly to be good to others.**
- When Christianity became the official faith of Rome, Christians traded the vaguely moral emphasis for a practice of fasting & prayer aimed at **living the New Year in the New Life of Christ.**
- the New Year celebration later reverted to March 1, & the early emphasis on spiritual things shifted to January 1 **as the Feast of the Circumcision**
- In 1752, when Britain & its possessions adopted the Gregorian calendar, January 1 again came to be recognized & celebrated as the first day of the year.



# SPIRITUAL RESOLUTIONS

- In the 18th century, Jonathan Edwards, known for his fiery sermons— made a list of spiritual resolutions and reviewed them weekly.
- His spiritual resolutions began: ***“Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God’s help, I do humbly entreat him by his grace to enable me to keep these Resolutions.”***
- What are resolutions that would benefit our souls, as individuals, or that would help the “soul” of our communities?



# ReSOULutions (Spiritual Resolutions) to consider for 2022:

For each, consider these questions:

- Does this appeal to me? Does it feel possible?
  - What difference would it make in my life? The lives of others?
  - How\where could I start?
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## 1. Take time to reflect –

“I took the advice to keep a pandemic journal and it’s the single best thing I’ve done over the last two years.

I want to add to this daily journaling practice times of monthly/seasonal/annual reflection. This might simply be asking myself, as I look over my calendar, my project lists, my daily journal: ***What’s working? What’s not? Why?***”

— Jen Pollock Michel, author of “A Habit Called Faith” and “Surprised by Paradox”



## 2. Plant seeds of humility –

“Make it a bimonthly goal to engage in a conversation with One who is not part of your political, religious, or cultural with the intention of learning something from them. Then, watch humility grow, which is a forgotten yet desperately needed virtue in our age of polarization and cancellation.

— Paul Lim, a historian of Christianity at Vanderbilt University



## 3. Care for the earth in small ways –

“Find one or two small ways to care more faithfully for creation”  
...“climate change continues to disrupt and destroy lives. I want to love my neighbor by being conscious about my use and consumption of the planet. If everyone does something, those small things add up to big things.”

— Kathryn Freeman, freelance writer and a co-host of the podcast “Melanated Faith”



**4. Think about the third person** -“Every time we act, our actions affect more people than we actually see....**solidarity** is recognizing that we are all connected as human beings & that our own well-being is tied up with the well-being of others.

One small way to live that out is to ***pause before taking a particular action to think about the third person who will be affected by it.***

“So, for instance, if you send an angry email to someone, you will be affected by it first, and the person you send it to will be affected by it second, but who will be next? That person’s spouse? Their child? What will that effect be? Is it worth it?

***If we all thought a little more about the third person, we would likely be more careful with how we treat each other.”***

— The Rev. Jonathan Mitchican, Catholic priest and writer



## 5. Engage with the offscreen world first –

“Every morning, wherever I am in the world, I go outside before I look at a screen... as soon as I step outside, I not only find my senses coming alive, I also find myself feeling smaller — a creature in the midst of creation, rather than the god of a tiny glowing world.

...I’ve found myself far more grateful, far less anxious and far less interested in whatever my screens have to tell me that day...”

— **Andy Crouch, author of “The Techwise Family”**



## 6. Make a plan to seek racial justice & healing -

“Write a racial justice action plan. The difference between a dream and a goal is a plan...I’m sitting down with my whole family to make this plan using the “ARC of Racial Justice” as a model.

We’re going to be intentional about building our ***awareness***, forging ***relationships*** with a variety of people, and ***committing*** to working on a systemic level to fight racism.

Defying the dehumanizing effects of racism is good for our neighbors and our own souls.”

\*ARC is an acronym that stands for awareness, relationships, and commitment

— Jemar Tisby, historian and author of “The Color of Compromise” and “How to Fight Racism”



## 7. Take stock of your life every week –

“John Newton ...had a 6 p.m. Saturday exercise to help him get ready for Sunday. It had three parts.

The first part was to make **two lists** —

**all the mercies, blessings and good things to be thankful for** that had happened to him that week.

And second, a **list of sins — of omission and commission** — he had committed against others and God.

The second part was to reflect on the discrepancy between God’s goodness to him and his behavior. This helped him get a refreshed joy in **God’s free, undeserved grace....**

“The third part was a **rededication of life**, a refreshing and deepening of our commitment to **God and God’s promises.**”

- Tim Keller, pastor and theologian



## 8. Keep the Sabbath –

“In 2020, I, like the rest of the world, was forced into rest...But then in the summer of 2021, many of the events and activities picked up. It felt like we were catching up on lost time & went full speed ahead...

But this fast-paced, nonstop work and activity isn't the way humans are made. **I need rest — that's how God created us.** The Bible instructs us to rest and ultimately rest in Jesus.

So, for 2022 I intend to keep the Sabbath. I'll spend one day each week resting from all forms of work. It will be an act of worship and a declaration of my need for the Lord. Also, I need the rest.”

— Trillia Newbell, speaker and author of several books, including “God's Very Good Idea”





## 9. Encourage the people around you –

“My reSOULution is to look for an opportunity every day to give encouragement to someone in my path, whether that be a family member, a colleague, a cashier or a child.

Giving encouragement benefits my well-being too.”

— Dorena Williamson, author of “ColorFull” and “The Celebration Place”



## 10. Pray for political leaders — especially ones you don’t like –

“Think about our political leaders and pray for the ones you don’t like. But make them **prayers of gratitude**: for the things they do well, for the people whose lives they help improve, for the ways they contribute to human flourishing. And if you can’t come up with anything, ask yourself if it’s because they need to change or because you need to change.”

— John Inazu, professor of law and religion at Washington University in St. Louis and author of “Confident Pluralism”






**“I want to try something in this list that is hard for me and to try something that fills me with hope and possibility.**

**As we begin 2022, these friends inspire me and dare me to believe that things can be made new — even me, even us.”**

Tish Harrison Warner

Look at the list again. Ask yourself:

- **What is one of these spiritual resolutions that appeals to me & feels possible that I could see yourself trying this year?**
- **What difference would it make in my life?**
- **How\where could I start?**
- **How might it improve my life and soul – or the “soul” of my world?**

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1. **Take time to reflect** – journaling and/or times of monthly/seasonal/annual reflection.
  2. **Plant seeds of humility** - engage with one who is not part of your political/religious or cultural community with the intention of learning something from them.
  3. **Care for the earth in small ways** - be conscious about my use and consumption of the planet.
  4. **Think about the third person** - pause before taking a particular action to think about the third person who will be affected by it.
  5. **Engage with the offscreen world first** - go outside before looking at a screen.
  6. **Make a plan to seek racial justice & healing** - be intentional about building *awareness*, forging *relationships* with a variety of people, & *committing* to working on a systemic level to fight racism.
  7. **Take stock of your life every week** – List good things to be thankful for, list poor choices we've made and good ones we have not; reflect on God's undeserved grace; & rededicate our lives to deepening our commitment to God and God's promises
  8. **Keep the Sabbath** - spend one day each week resting from all forms of work
  9. **Encourage the people around you** - look for an opportunity every day to give encouragement to someone in my path
  10. **Pray for political leaders, even unlikable ones** – and make them prayers of gratitude

## Music for New Beginnings: Nina Simone - “Feeling Good”

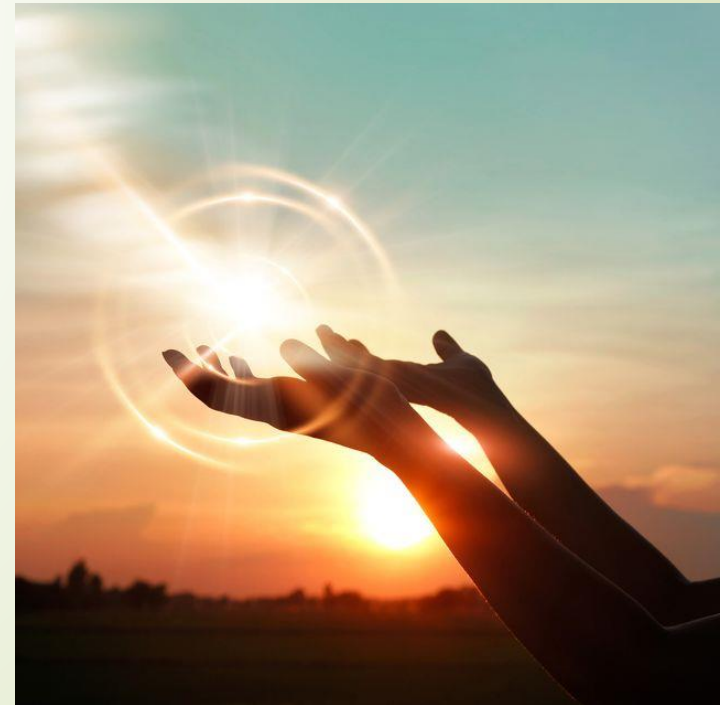
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHRNrgDIJfo>



## A TIME TO SHARE YOUR PRAYERS

for people or concerns you wish to mention, or to express gratitude...

- An opportunity for your 'Conversation with God'
- Turn On your Audio/ Video ...
- I'll start with my prayer, then join in as you are comfortable
- I will conclude





## A Prayer for the New Year

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HELPER IN OUR PAST AND  
HOPE FOR OUR FUTURE:  
HOLD OUR GOOD INTENTIONS,  
FREE US FROM THAT  
WHICH KEEPS US FROM THE GOOD,  
AND ENABLE US TO MOVE  
INTO THE COMING YEAR  
WITH YOUR LOVE BEHIND, BESIDE,  
AND BEFORE US. AMEN.